

**Vermont Advisory Board for Children and Youth
With Special Mental Health Needs**

**April 7, 2006
Weeks, Room 100, Waterbury Complex
12:00-3:00**

Present: Guy Wood, Ted Tighe, Jo-Anne Unruh, Julie Welkowitz
Absent: Carla Brisson, Sherry Nelson, Kreig Pinkham, Jeff McKee
Guests: Alice Maynard, Claire Bruno, Clare McFadden, Monica Hutt, Renee Kievit-Kylar

I. Housekeeping

Approved minutes of March 10 meeting

II. Updates

A. Meeting dates

- Guy will cancel the tentative meeting on May 2 with AHS Secretary Cindy LaWare regarding the 2006 priority recommendations. He will offer two other dates: June 9 or June 2.
- The Board will cancel the May 12 meeting since members will attend the day-long May 1 kick-off for the expanded LITs/SIT under the Interagency Agreement. Guy, Jo-Anne, Julie, Ted, and Sherry plan to attend the May 1 event. Alice will e-mail Jo-Anne copies of the Board's 2006 priority recommendations and the 2005 LIT responses to the Board's queries to copy and have at the Board's resource table.
- The Board will meet on
 - either June 9 or June 2, whichever date is possible for Secretary LaWare;
 - July 14
 - September 8
 - October 6 [full day fall event].
- The Board canceled its August meeting.

B. 2005 and 2006 Board appointments

- Reminder that nominees cannot be from Chittenden or Washington counties to address the geographic diversity issue.
- 2005 former DCF position:
 - Guy has spoken with person from NFI who works well with youth and DCF. Alice will follow up with call and forms.
 - Ted will ask S. Prager.
- 2006
 - Education position: Jo-Anne will re-submit her name. She will also send contact information to Alice on two possible candidates so the application forms can be sent to them.
 - Advocate position: Ted will ask I. Pixley. We have a second person, but have not yet received paperwork.
 - Parent position: Sherry will re-submit her name. Jo-Anne will ask a parent from their region.

C. Other

- It was reported that Sherry Schoenberg is writing a statement from Commissioners Cate and Dale committing to the creation of infrastructure support for LITs. This

will also include an evaluation of the expanded LITs. The Board wishes to acknowledge this effort at the October 6 meeting.

III. Autism White Paper

Claire Bruno (DOE's Autism Consultant) and Clare McFadden (DAIL's Autism Specialist) discussed the recently completed white paper on autism as requested by the Board's 2005 priority recommendations. The members of the Board commended the quality of the paper's content, viewing it as a solid template for discussion and action planning. Claire and Clare reviewed the groups on the distribution list.

Next steps were discussed as everyone agreed that on the need to secure commitment from people to move forward. Over the next few months, Claire and Clare will travel around the state again to meet with people and build a consensus on priorities and an action plan. They share a belief that early intervention by proven methods hand in hand with training are the most critical elements at this time. When asked by the Board, Claire and Clare said that their positions were designed to foster system change, not to manage a case load. Clare and Claire will meet with SIT on April 10. Other suggestions include meetings with the mental health Children's Services Directors, Directors of Developmental Services (even though currently DS does not serve children; children do become adults), and Field Service Directors.

The Board volunteered to help in several ways, including the following.

- further distribution of white paper
- support emerging priorities, especially thru annual recommendations
- help to increase public awareness of the needs
- seek additional financial resources
- work with DOE and DAIL to develop plan for all ages
- Jo-Anne will arrange a conversation with the Council of Special Education Administrators
- suggest links with
 - the Center for Disability Inclusion. Julie and Ted are familiar with the CDI and their great track record with grants
 - Ruth Hamilton and BEST strategies for system change
 - I-Team may be interested in collaboration
 - Higher Education Collaborative
 - EBD graduate program at Southern New Hampshire University; Julie does curriculum development work with them

Research has shown that appropriate intensive early interventions (*i.e.*, 25 hours per week of 1:1 work year round) make a significant impact on children with autism resulting in a diminished need for support later. Clare and Claire want to sit down with Vermont providers of early intensive intervention to get a clear picture of what they do (*e.g.*, Baird, WCMH). Then they will pursue a dialog with the state level staff of the Family, Infant, and Toddler Program (FITP) and Early Essential Education (EEE), neither of whom currently support this standard. There are notable service gaps statewide, and most parents have to stop their careers because they are unable to find suitable care for their child.

Discussed the article on incidence of autism by Shattuck. Jo-Anne noted that Vermont, unlike some states, requires a diagnosis by a physician for autism, which presumably increases the reliability of Vermont's incidence data. Ted stated that Shattuck used Vermont data as a subset for his article and was very responsive to e-mail on the subject. It was noted that, with a national

prevalence estimate of 1:166, Vermont should have an identified population of 596; we currently have a population of 540 and growing.

Clare and Claire were asked to return for the September 8 meeting of the Board to briefly discuss the status of any emerging consensus. If there is sufficient consensus, Claire and Clare were asked to meet with the Board at its November 10 session to discuss a possible priority recommendation for the 2007 system of care.

IV. Expanded LITs/SIT

Monica Hutt, DCF's Senior Field Services Manager, reviewed the status of preparations for the May 1 kick-off for the expanded Local Interagency Teams (LITs) and the State Interagency Team (SIT) under the new IDEA Interagency Agreement. This is a time for LITs to get together as the implementation of the expansion takes hold.

The population covered is children who are:

1. eligible for Special Education (*i.e.*, diagnosed with any of 14 specific disabilities defined in federal and state law and experiencing an adverse educational effect and needing specialized instruction to benefit from their education) and
2. receiving disability related services from the Agency of Human Services, and
3. eligible for service coordination.

There will be a packet of information for the participants.

- SIT wants everyone to be clear that Act 264 still exists. The Interagency Agreement simply expands the covered population. A side-by-side chart has been prepared.
- They are writing a *User's Guide* to give a common understanding to Act 264 veterans and newcomers to the approach.
- People should see the Coordinated Services Plan (CSP) as an expanded tool. The goal is to have standardized use of the CSP in all areas of the state.
- There will be regional training.
- There is a new Task Force which will stay together and help to organize on-going support to the expanded system.

Everyone agreed on the importance of outreach to and dialog between SIT, LITs, and the Board.

A request was made for an audio tape of the presentations made during the day.

V. Public Comment

None.

VI. Possible Future Agenda Items

- June 9 or 2: meeting with AHS Secretary LaWare; planning for the fall meetings with SIT, LITs, and Commissioners
- September 8: emerging consensus on autism action plan
- October 6: full day input gathering
- November 10: discuss possible priority recommendations for 2007; update on possible autism recommendation
- December 8: final decision on priority recommendations; work on language and format
- January 12: finalize work on 2007 priority recommendations